

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 2, 4, 12, and 16-18 are requested to be cancelled without prejudice to further prosecution on the merits in this or any other proceeding.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 11 are currently being amended. No new matter is added.

No new claims are being added.

Allowable Subject Matter

On page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that Claims 4-7 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended independent Claim 1 to include all of the limitations of previously presented Claim 4 (as well as intervening and previously presented Claim 2). Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 1 is now a presentation of the allowable subject matter of previously presented Claim 4.

After the cancellation of Claims 16-18, all of the remaining pending claims now depend from independent Claim 1 and are therefore also allowable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 8-11, 13 and 16-18 as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,434,482 to Oshida et al. (“Oshida”) in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,049,755 to Lou et al. (“Lou”) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim 1 has been amended to include subject matter that the Examiner has indicated is allowable. Claims 3, 8-11 and 13 depend from Claim 1. Claims 16-18 are cancelled. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection based on Oshida in view of Lou is now moot.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 14 and 15 as being unpatentable over Oshida as modified by Lou as applied to the claims above, and further in view of U.S. Pat. No. 6,351,698 to Kubota et al. (“Kubota”) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claims 14 and 15 depend from independent Claim 1, which has been amended to include allowable subject matter. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection based on Oshida, Lou, and Kubota is now moot.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

* * *

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by the credit card payment instructions in EFS-Web being incorrect or absent, resulting in a rejected or incorrect credit card transaction, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicants hereby petition for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorize payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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